

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	243031
Site Address:	27 The Square, Spencers Wood, Wokingham, RG7 1BS
Expiry Date:	7 February 2025 (EoT)
Site Visit Date:	3 January 2024
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey side and rear extensions following demolition of the existing conservatory.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Contaminated Land Consultation Zone
Areas of Special Character
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Modest Development Location – Spencer's Wood
Nuclear Consultation Zone
Electricity Sub Station

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP3 – General Principles for Development CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC07 – Parking CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB04 – Development in vicinity of Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE), Burghfield TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB26 – Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List A Vision for Our Villages: Ryeish Green, Spencers Wood, Three Mile Cross Shinfield Neighbourhood Plan

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
970764	Proposed Erection of Five Dwellings.	Refused 11/01/1999
163287	Full Application for the proposed erection of no2 detached dwellings.	Refused 03/02/2017

CONSULTATION RESPONSES**Internal**

WBC Drainage – No objection subject to conditons
WBC Highways – No objection
WBC Ecology – Conditions recommended

External

None Consulted

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Shinfield Parish Council had no comments on this application.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description: The site relates to a two-storey, semi-detached dwelling in Spencer's Wood. The site is located within an Area of Special Character (The Square, Spencer's Wood). This is a predominantly residential area where its positive design aspects comprise of Victorian styled detached and semi-detached red brick dwellings with attractive pattern brickwork. These properties reflect a similar design, scale and material palette although there are some exceptions to this rule.

The sites façade is a traditional, Victorian style façade with traditional features including timber sliding windows and decorative designs in the brickwork. The site has a gable roof formation with slate tiles. Access to the property can be found on the western side elevation, away from the direct street frontage. The front of the site benefits from a small driveway and variety of greenery. The side and rear of the property benefits from a large plot of land which measures approx. 19m wide 74m deep and is undeveloped on the northern side retaining an important verdant gap within the street- scene which forms part of the established character of The Square.

Proposal: This application proposes a single storey side extension which will measure approx. 7.5 metres in width, 7.2 metres in length and 4.9 metres in height followed by a single storey rear extension which will measure approx. 5 metres in width, 6 metres in length and 2.9 metres in height to replace the existing conservatory. A new driveway will also be development accompany the extensions and improve the parking opportunity of the site.

Principle of Development: The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The site is located within settlement limits and as such the development should be acceptable providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.

Character of the Area: The site is located within a residential area and an area of special character. The proposed side extension will create a kitchen/ family room, and the proposed rear extension will create a new master bedroom.

The brickwork used for the development will be Flemish brickwork to match the existing, the traditional pattern of the existing dwelling will be replicated as closely as possible onto the extension to ensure the special character of the dwelling continues to be demonstrated throughout the extension. The development proposes a variety of roof formations, including a flat roof for the rear extension followed by a pitched roof for the side extension. Both roofs will be composed of slate roof tile along with barge boards to match the existing dwelling and replicate the traditional architectural features of the site.

Fenestrations include traditional timber sliding sash windows to match the existing, a timber Victorian entrance door at the front of the property to coincide with the special character of the area and existing dwelling. To the side and rear of the property, which will be screened from the street, black aluminium bi-folding doors are proposed for side and rear access to the sites large rear garden whilst adding a contemporary touch to the property without impacting the special character the surrounding area holds.

It is clear that efforts have been made to ensure the façade of the extension replicates the traditional features of the existing dwelling to maintain the special character of the surrounding area in accordance with policy CP3 of the Core Strategy and TB21 & TB26 of the Managing Development Delivery document.

Side Extension:

The single storey side extension will create an open plan kitchen/family room and measures approx. 7.5 metres in width, 7.2 metres in length and 4.9 metres in height. The side development will become the new front entrance to the property and includes a small, conventional covered front porch surrounding the Victorian entrance door. Proposed fenestrations include two windows on the front elevation and a large set of bi-folding doors on the rear elevation of the development.

The Wokingham Borough Design Guide (BDG) includes guidance in terms of shape, size and design for side extensions, the guidance follows:

- *A gap should be retained between the building and the site boundary, and this*

should be a minimum of 1m in width.

- *Side extensions should not generally project forward of the building line on the street frontage(s).*

The development does not protrude forward of the building line of the existing site. A distance of 6.5 metres will be retained between the side extension and north side boundary which exceeds the 1 metre minimum on the BDG. As a result, the development complies with the BDG and is therefore acceptable.

Within the vicinity, no. 25 The Square demonstrates an example of side development within the area, as well as this, as the development will be set well back from the street frontage and the design ties in well with the traditionality of the area, there will be little impact on the character of the area as a result of the development, in accordance with policy CP3 of the Core Strategy.

Rear Extension:

The single storey rear extension will create a new master bedroom which will measure approx. 5 metres in width, 6 metres in length and 2.9 metres in height. The development will include 2 rear windows, looking out onto the rear garden and a small set of bi-folding doors for side access to the rear garden.

The Wokingham Borough Council Design Guide (BDG) provides some guidance on single storey rear extensions which relate to design and scale. It states the following:

- *Rear extensions should not project more than 4 meters from the main rear wall where they are close to a boundary.*
- *Maximum eaves height and ridge height should be no more than those of the existing property.*
- *The eaves height of single storey extensions should not exceed 3m within 2m of a side boundary.*

The development will project further than 4 meters from the existing rear wall (6 metres) however due to the vast size and depth of the rear garden (50 metres) the additional 2 metres will not have a significant impact on neighbouring property no. 25 The Square or rear opposing neighbours and is therefore acceptable. The rear extension proposes a flat roof which will not exceed the eaves/ridge height of the existing property. The site is semi-detached therefore the rear extension will be built by the boundary with the neighbouring property, however as the eaves height measures 2.86 metres this is acceptable and will not have a significant impact on no. 25 The Square. As a result, the development complies with the BDG and is therefore acceptable.

There are a few examples of rear development in the area including nos. 37 and 39 The Square, showing the proposal is not out of character for the area. As well as this, the rear development will be screened from the street scene therefore having little impact on the street scene and character of the area, in accordance with policy CP3 of the Core Strategy.

It should also be mentioned that the proposal includes a thorough parking area/driveway to the front and side of the dwelling. This will significantly improve the parking arrangement of the property, take parked cars off the narrow street and has been welcomed by WBC Highways.

The driveway will be pale grey block paving with a variety of shading to maintain the traditional look. In terms of character, as the site is a corner plot, the driveway will be relatively screened from the street scene and the block paving will be made to look traditional to tie in with the special character of the area, the development is acceptable.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking:

The development does not propose any side windows on either elevation therefore there are no chances of overlooking from side windows. Due to the vast size and depth of the plot, the rear windows do not pose an overlooking concern to dwellings at the rear of the property. As for the front windows, the development will be set well back from the street which reduces any chance of overlooking from front windows. Overall, the development does not raise any concerns of overlooking.

Loss of Light:

A 45-degree horizontal test was carried out from the approximate centre point of neighbouring ground floor windows of no.25 The Square. This was not breached as a result of the development and as such, the development will not result in any substantial loss of light to this neighbour.

Overbearing:

As both developments are single storey and modest in terms of shape and size, the proposals raise no concerns of overbearing.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: The proposal will result in an additional habitable room, a parking plan was provided by the applicant to show the development of a new block paved driveway which will be able to accommodate multiple vehicles. The Council's Highways Officer has reviewed the proposal and concluded that the extension will not have a significant impact in respect of the council's parking standards. There is existing driveway parking for up to two vehicles. The submitted drawing indicates an improved driveway parking area, and this is welcome.

Flooding and Drainage: The WBC Drainage Officer has no objection to the proposal subject to a condition requesting details of the drainage system for the site to be published and approved by the local planning authority.

From looking at the 'Flood Map for Planning' on the Government website, the site is located within Flood Zone 1 but as the development is under 1 hectare a flood risk assessment or details on the drainage system is not required for this application.

Additionally, there will be a loss of permeable land on the site however due to the vast size of the plot which will remain as permeable land, this will not make a significant difference to the flooding risk of the site.

It is therefore considered unreasonable and excessively onerous to attach a condition requiring the submission of details of the drainage system for the site. Accordingly, the condition is not recommended.

Ecology: The site is located within a Bat Roost Suitability Habitat. As such, a bat survey is required for applications that involve roof modifications or demolition. A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment was submitted by the applicant.

The Council's Ecology Officer has reviewed the plans and assessment concluding that significant changes had been made to designs and development proposals assessed in the PBRA, they were satisfied that development proposed is unlikely to result in illegal disturbance of active bat roost. The site is assessed as having 'moderate' potential to host a bat roost. This is because it has a number of features potentially suitable for use by roosting bats, is located in habitats of 'moderate' to 'high' suitability for commuting and foraging bats and is in close proximity to a known bat roost. The Ecology Officer recommended conditions to help with the protection of breeding birds and details of an external lighting design strategy to protect biodiversity. However, having assessed these conditions against the Gov tests for such, I conclude that they would not be necessary or reasonable given the measures would be overly onerous for the limited scale of the proposed development and considering other legislation exists to protect nesting birds.

The Ecology Officer also stated that the Ecologist had failed to assess the direct and indirect impacts of the proposed works, in particular the hedge and tree clearance. As a result, the Ecology Officer recommended conditions to retain the protection of trees and shrubs on the site including Condition CL7 – Protection of Trees and Shrubs, Condition CL6 – Retention of Trees and Shrubs and a prior-commencement condition for full details of soft and hard landscaping proposals to be submitted and approved. Having assessed the recommended conditions against the tests for conditions, I deem these conditions to be unnecessary and unreasonable for a householder application of this scale and given the existing trees and vegetation are not currently protected and could be removed without any approval. Therefore, these conditions are not recommended.

Another condition was recommended to include one integral bird box/integral bat bricks around the building. As the site has 'moderate' to 'high' potential for hosting a bat roost, and following the conclusion from the PBRA, this condition is deemed necessary and will be attached on the decision notice, if approved.

Subject to conditions, the development complies with policies CP7 and TB23.

Conclusion: Subject to conditions, this application is acceptable and therefore recommended for approval.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed for all CIL liable applications.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010): In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION	
Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	5 February 2025
Earliest date for decision:	1 January 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	06/02/25